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PAPERS

RELATING TO

CAPTAIN THOMAS LAWRENCE'S COMPANY,

RAISED IN GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS, DURING THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR, 1758.

REMARKS

MADE BEFORE

THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

MAY 8, 1890.

BY

SAMUEL ABBOTT GREEN, M.D.

CAMBRIDGE:
JOHN WILSON AND SON.
University Press.
1890.

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PAPERS

RELATING TO CAPTAIN THOMAS LAWRENCE'S COMPANY.

At a meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, held on May 8, 1890, Dr. Samuel A. Green, in presenting some old manuscripts, made the following remarks: —

These papers relate to a military company raised in Groton during the French and Indian War, and came into my possession several years ago. They were given to me by General Albert Harleigh Hill, of Groton, Vermont, a great-grandson of Ephraim Wesson, who commanded the company after the death of Captain Thomas Lawrence. The town of Groton, Vermont, was settled in part by families from Groton, Massachusetts, and through these early settlers the name was carried into the Green Mountain country. Captain Edmund Morse was married to Sally, a daughter of Captain Wesson; and their daughter Sally was married to John Hill, the father of General Hill. Captain Morse was a native of the Massachusetts town, and the earliest settler of the Vermont town, where, at the head of Wells River, he built the first saw-mill and grist-mill in the place.[1] In this way these manuscripts have come down from the middle of the last century.

Some of the items in the inventories of the soldiers' effects seem strange, and suggest many contrasts; but they throw glimpses of light into the dark corners of camp life during that period. In our times an officer roughing it on the frontiers would hardly have in his wardrobe a shirt ruffled at the

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[1] Miss Hemenway's "Vermont Historical Gazetteer," vol. iv. pp. 1146–1150.

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wrists, and the soldiers would scarcely carry chocolate among their private stores. The tea and coffee of the commissary nowadays render needless even this nutritious article of drink. The tump-line, also mentioned in the inventories, was a strap placed around the forehead to help a man support a burden carried on the back. It was in common use during the Revolutionary period, and still is among hunters and trappers on the frontiers. "To tump" means, "to drag along the body of a deer or other animal"; and the word appears to have been borrowed from the Indians. See Hubbard's "Woods and Lakes of Maine" (page 107), for a wood-cut showing the way in which the tump-line is used.

A short time after the retreat of the English from Ticonderoga, in the summer of 1758, Colonel Nichols's Massachusetts Regiment was waylaid, on July 20, at the Half-Way Brook, between Fort Edward and Lake George, and met with sore disaster. More than twenty soldiers were slain in the skirmish, and most of them scalped by the savage allies of the French. The Groton company suffered more severely than any other in the regiment. Their loss comprised Captain Thomas Lawrence; privates Abel Sawtell, Eleazer Ames, and Stephen Foster, all of Groton; Corporal Nehemiah Gould, of Groton Gore (sometimes spoken of as Township No. 1, and now lying mostly in Mason, New Hampshire); and Sergeant Oliver Wright, and Private Simon Wheeler, both of Westford. Sergeant Oliver Lakin, of Groton, and Private Joel Crosby, of Westford, were reported as missing, though one account says that Crosby was killed. It is known that Sergeant Lakin was taken prisoner during the action, and released from captivity the next year by paying a ransom. See "Groton during the Indian Wars" (pages 163–165) for a muster-roll of the company.

An account of this fight is given in Lieutenant Samuel Thompson's Diary, printed in the appendix to Sewall's History of Woburn (pages 547–558); and another account is found in Joseph Holt's Journal, printed in "The New England Historical and Genealogical Register" (X. 307–310) for October, 1856.

The following entry in regard to Sergeant Lakin appears in the Journal of the Massachusetts House of Representatives for January 10, 1760: —

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A Petition of *Oliver Laken* of *Groton*, in the County of *Middlesex*, shewing, that he was a Soldier in the Pay of the Province *Anno* 1758, and was on the 20th Day of *July* the same Year, Captivated by the Indian Enemy, suffered many & great Hardships, and was obliged to borrow a Sum of Money to purchase his Freedom from Captivity; he therefore prays he may be allowed the Sum of Money he borrowed; also the Charges of his Passage home, and a further Allowance for his Loss of Time and Sufferings &c. (Page 153.)

The answer is found two days later, in the Journal of January 12, as follows: —

The Committee appointed to consider the Petition of *Oliver Lakin*, Reported thereon.

Read, and accepted in Part, *viz. Resolved*, That the Sum of *eight Pounds*, be allowed and paid out of the public Treasury to *William Lawrence*, Esq; for the Use of the Petitioner, in full Consideration for his Services and Sufferings therein mentioned.

Sent up for Concurrence. (Page 160.)

In the same Journal, June 13, 1759, there is —

A Petition of *David Sartwell* of *Groton*, in the County of *Middlesex*, setting forth, that his son *Abel Sartwell*, went forth in the Expedition against *Canada* the last Year; that near *Half-Way-Brook* (so-called) he was in an Engagement with the Enemy, and killed; that his Gun was then lost; he therefore prays the Stoppage may be taken off, and the Treasurer be directed to allow him the *three Pounds* mentioned. (Page 40.)

Copies of some of these manuscripts are here given: —

MIDDLESEX ss may ye 23d 1758

Whereas Capt Thomas Lawrance Informs me the Subscriber one of his majestys Justices of the peace for Said County that a Number of men belonging to his Company that have been Preswaded to Carry their own arms in the Present Expedition Disigned against Canada Disire that Some Suitable Persons may may [*sic*] be appointed to apprize the Said arms I do therefore hearby appoint and Impower Capt Benja Bancroft Lieut Joseph Gillson & Lieut. William Nutting to apprize Such arms as belongs to the Said Lawrences Company at there Present true Value and to act faithfullyly [*sic*] and Impartially accordingly to their best of their Skill and Judgment

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agreeable to the above Directions we the Subscribers Have vied [viewed] ye armes of the Severall Solldier hearafter Named and in our Judgment their Guns Respectively are worth the Sum Prefixed against Each mans Name

	Oliver Wright	£1.10.0
	Benjamin Nutting . . .	1.10.0
	Daniel Gilson	1.12.0
	John Erwin Ju^r	0.16.0
	Simon Wheeler	1.16.0
	Eleazer ames	1.17.4
	Joel Crosby	1.12.0
a Coppy	Simon Gilson	2. 0.0
	Capt Thos Lawrence . .	3. 6.8
	Stephen Kemp apprentice to Edmund Bancroft	1. 8.0
	Lt Eph^m Wesson . . .	1.16.0

Witness our hands

Benj^a Bancroft
Joseph Gillson } apprisors &c
William Nutting

[Endorsed]

MIDD^x ss may 23^d 1758

then the within named Capt Benj^a Bancroft Joseph Gillson & William Nutting appeared and made Sollom oath to act as within Directed

before me WILLIAM LAWRANCE
Justice of peace

A Coppy &c

Daniel Gilson
Moses Blood
John Eruen Ju^r

Then we received Our Guns Bayonets and Slings for our Guns Out of the Province Stores by the hand of Thomas Lawrance Capt under Whose Command we be; we say Received

By us and acknowledge the Recept there of as Witness Our hands

WORCESTER May the 26/1758

Joseph Farwell Ju^r	Nathanael Lakin
Henry Woods	Obadiah Perry
Nehemiah Goold	Moses Gould
Oliver Lakin	Joseph Kemp
Oliver Parker	Thomas Scott
Ephraim Severanc	Oliver Shattuck

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David Shattuck
John His × mark Chamberlain
Simeon His × mark Nutting
Simon His × mark Lakin
John Nutting

Nathaniel Parker
Joseph Hartwell
William Parker
Simon his × mark foster
Stephen his × mark foster
Oliver farnsworth

When you shall haue Rec[d] the Prouision for your men you are to Draw up your Company in The most Conuient Place Near the Meeting hous and Be Ready to march When the word is Giuen After you ar Embodied you ar to Make a Return of all Deserters spacifying the town in which they Dewll Likewise to Report the E[s]tate of your Company with Regard to Ammunition & Prouision &c: and you are hereby ordered not to suffer any To Stragel or Loiter Behind you are to Place a Number of men in the front Who haue Arms to Couer the others who haue no arms Ordering a Sufficence in the Rear that shall be able to answer the Like End and you are to see that the men Keep from hudling at any Riur Brook Fordway or Place Difficuts that we may meet with in our way to our Head Quarters you are orderd hereby to make a Report Euery Euening of the Estate of your Company and to send an under officer to Receiue all Orders Immediatly when the Regiment shall be Orderd To Encamp and to se Puntablely obeyed all that shall Be giuen out from Time to Time that may Res[p]ect any of the Seruice you are not to suffer any of your men To march Before the aduance Guard nor to Loiter Behind the Rear unless Sickness or Lameness Preuent his Keeping up. You are to see that there is No fireing on the march or in Camp —

I am Your Very Good Frend JOHN CUMING

To Cap[t] LAWRANCE
N: H: [Northampton] June 1st 1758

July y[e] 24 = 1758

Halfway Brook then we who have under Neath Subscribed ware appointid By order of Cor[lo] Nichols to Apprise the things that Cap[t] Thomas Larrance has Left and his men that was Kild in the fight a true Inventorey of the things that ware Dilivered to us all Appised in old tenor

Itum his purs	15 = 11 — 0
It one Noat	04 = 13 — 1
It: one Noat	30 — 18 — 9

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It one pair of woolen Breatches - - - -	1 — 10 — 0		
It one Shirt Ruffiled at the Hands - - - -	3 = 00 — 0		
It one Shirt Not Ruffiled	2 — 05 — 0		
It one Wig at - - -	4 — 00 — 0		
It one pair of worsted Stocking - - - -	0 — 18 — 0		
It one pair of Worsted Stocking - - - -	0 — 12 — 0	Daniel Fletcher Leonard Spaulding Joseph Walker	Apprisors
It one pair of Shoos -	2 — 05 — 0		
It one Brass Ink pot -	0 = 05 — 0		
It one pound and a half of Tobacko - - - -	0 = 09 — 0		
It one Ribbond for a Tye	0 — 05 — 0		
It one Shot moles and Lades - - - - -	1 — 00 — 0		
It one Wooden Bottel at	0 — 09 — 0		
It one tumpline Napsack Sleepers and Check -	0 — 10 — 0		
It one Rasor - - - -	0 — 05 — 0		
	68 = 15 — 10 Total		

the things Belonging to Saj[t] Oliver Wright

Itum his purs - - -	1 = 2 = 6	
It his Booke - - - -	0 = 5 — 0	
It one Coat - - - -	2 = 5 = 0	
It one pair of Druget Shirts - - - - - -	3 = 10 = 0	
It Indin Stocking and Socks - - - - - -	1 — 0 — 0	Daniel Fletc Leonard S Joseph W
It one pair of Breatches	2 — 0 — 0	
It one pair of Shoos -	0 — 15 — 0	
It one pair of Stockins	0 — 10 — 0	
It one Box and Shoger and Chockalat - -	0 — 10 — 0	
It one Rasor - - -	0 — 5 —	
	12 —	

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the things Belonging to Saj[t] Oliver Laking

Itum one Shirt at - -	1 — 10 — 0		
It one Lining Shirt at	0 — 05 — 0		
It one pair of Lether Breatches - - - -	1 — 05 — 0	Daniel Fletcher	Apprisors
It one wescott - - -	0 — 10 — 0	Leonard Spaulding	
It one Tumpline and Belt	0 — 05 — 0	Joseph Walker	
It one pair of Shoos -	0 — 10 — 0		
It one Bottel and Napsack	0 — 10 — 0		
	4 — 15 — 0	Total	
It one Blanket - - -	2 — 5 — 0		

---

the things Belonging Corpril Nehemiah Goold

Itum one jacket - - -	2 = 5 — 0		
It one Druget Shirt at	1 — 0 — 0		
It one pair of Stockins	0 — 12 — 0		
It one Cap and hankercheif - - - - - -	0 — 05 — 0	Daniel Fletcher	Apprisors
It one pair of Shoos and Buckels - - - - -	0 — 12 — 0	Leonard Spaulding Joseph Walker	
It one pound of Sope -	0 — 10 — 0		
It two Napsacks footings	0 — 10 — 0		
It one pair of Specks -	0 — 07 — 6		
	6 = 2 — 6	Total	
It one pound of tobacko	0 — 10 — 0		

---

the things that Belong to Elea[z]er Eames

Itum one Shirt - - -	1 — 10 — 0		
It one Coat at - - -	0 — 10 — 0		
It one pair of Lether Breatches - - - - -	1 — 10 — 0		
It one pair of Shoos and Buckels - - - - -	1 — 00 — 0	Daniel Fletcher Leonard Spaulding	Apprisors
It one jacket and Cap at - - - - - - - -	0 — 10 — 0	Joseph Walker	
It two pair of Stocking and Stocks and Napsack and tumpline at - -	1 — 0 — 0		
It one pound of Shuger	0 — 8 — 0		
	6 — 8 — 0	Total	

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the things that Belonged to Simon Wheeler

Itum one Coat at - -	2 — 10 — 0	
It one Cotten Shirt at	1 — 10 — 0	
It one pair of Indin Stockins - - - - - - -	0 — 18 — 0	
It one Knife and gimblet - - - - - - -	0 — 07 — 0	Daniel Fletcher, Leonard Spaulding, Joseph Walker — Apprisors
It one Rasor - - -	0 — 5 — 0	
It one pair of trousers and Hankercheif -	0 — 15 — 0	
It half a pound of tobacko and Bottel - - -	0 = 05 — 0	
It one Napsack and hatch	0 — 10 — 0	
	7 — 0 — 0	Total

---

the things that Belong to Able Sartwell

Itum one Coat - - -	3 — 0 — 0	
It one Druget Shirt -	1 — 10 — 0	
It one pair of Stocking - - - - - - -	0 — 10 — 0	Daniel Fletcher, Leonard Spaulding, Joseph Walker — Apprisors
It one pair of Leather Breatches - - - -	0 — 15 — 0	
It one tumpline Cap and Hankercheef - - -	0 — 15 — 0	
	6 = 10 — 0	Total

---

the things that Belong to Joel Crosbee

Itum his purs - -	11 = 5 — 0	
It one Coat - - - -	1 — 5 — 0	
It one pair of Breatches	1 — 15 — 0	
It one Druget Shirt -	1 — 10 — 0	
It one pair of Indin Stocks	0 — 15 — 0	Daniel Fletcher, Leonard Spaulding, Joseph Walker — Apprisors
It one Cap - - - -	0 — 04 — 0	
It one pair of footing & Stocking - - - -	0 — 15 — 0	
It half a pound of Chocolate - - - - - -	0 — 05 — 0	
It one pair tow Breiches and tumpline & - -	0 — 07 — 0	
	18 = 2 — 0	Total
	2 — 5 — 0	

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the things that Belong to Stephen Foster

Itum one grate Coate at	3 — 0 — 0	Daniel Fletcher	Apprisors
It one Druget Shirt -	1 — 2 — 6	Leonard Spaulding	
		Joseph Walker	
It one Jacket at - - -	1 — 5 — 0		
It one Blanket - - -	2 — 5 — 0		
	7 = 12 = 6 Total		

Things Belonging to Leonard parker

	O[ld] Tenor		
Impr T° One pare of pumps - - - - -	£2 : 5 : 0	John Clapham Cp^t	Apprisors
Im To 1 pare of Blew Hose - - - - -	0 : 6 : 0	Henry Woods En^s	
Im. To 1 pare of Lether Breaches - - - -	0 : 6 : 0	David Fletcher	
Im: To 1 Blew Jaccut -	1 : 2 : 6		
Im: To a Flowered Jaccut	0 : 4 : 0		
Im: a Bulet pouch - -	0 : 4 = 6		
Im To a powder Horn -	0 : 5 : 0		
Im To a Tump Line -	0 : 9 : 0		
Im To a Cotton hankerchief	0 1 : 6		
Im To a Snap Sack - -	0 : 4 : 0		
Total	5 : 7 : 6		

GROTON Apriel y^e 18: 1759 Reciued of Eph^m Wesson one Doler in part of an Inuantory taken at half way brook of my brother Joel Crosbys affects I say Reciued by me ROBERT CROSBY

GROTON August ye 6: 1759 Reciued of Ephraim Wesson thirteen pounds twelue Shilings old tenor in part of an Invantary taken at the halfway brook of my brother Joel Crosbeys Cloaths I say Reciued by me ROBERT CROSBY

GROTON apriel ye 19th 1759 Reciued of Capt Eph^m Wesson Seuen pound twelue Shilings and Six pence old tenor in full of an Inuontary taken at the halfway brook of the things belonging to my Late husband Stephen Foster Deseast per me SARAH her + mark FOSTER

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GROTON may ye 5th 1759
Reciued of Capt. Ephraim Wesson Seuen pounds old tenor in full of an Inuantory taken at the halfway brook of my son Oliuer Lakins Cloaths I Say Reciued by me

her
MERIAM m LAKIN.
mark

GROTON May ye 15: 1759
Reciued of Capt Ephraim Wesson Seuen pounds Seuen Shilings old tenor in full of an Inuentary taken at the halfway-brook of the things belonging to my Late husband Nehemiah Goold Desast by me

ESTHER GOOLD.

Captain Thomas Lawrence was a son of Thomas and Prudence Lawrence, and born at Groton, on September 3, 1720. According to tradition he was a man of great size and strength.

Sergeant Oliver Lakin was a son of William and Miriam Lakin, and born at Groton on February 24, 1733–4.

Corporal Nehemiah Gould was married to Esther Bowers at Groton, on November 1, 1737.

Eleazer Ames was a son of John and Elizabeth Ames, and born at Groton, on April 3, 1736. His grandfather, John Ames, was killed by the Indians at the gate of his own house, on July 9, 1724.

Stephen Foster was married to Sarah Blood at Groton, on August 5, 1748.

Leonard Parker, who does not appear to have been killed in this action, and may have belonged to another Company, was a son of Phinehas and Abigail Parker, and born at Groton, on June 3, 1718.

Abel Sawtell — as the name is usually spelled — was a son of David and Elizabeth Sawtell, and born at Groton, on January 23, 1739–40.

Captain Ephraim Wesson was a brother of Nathan Weston, the ancestor on his mother's side of the Honorable Melville Weston Fuller, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Among these papers is a printed broadside, which gives the amount of pay allowed the officers and enlisted men, in the different grades of service at that period, as follows: —

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Province of the Massachusetts-Bay.

ESTABLISHMENT of the Forces on the intended Expedition against CANADA.

To each able-bodied effective Man, who shall voluntarily inlist before the 15th Day of April *next,* Thirty Shillings, *and upon his passing Muster, shall receive a good Blanket, and* Fifty Shillings *more for furnishing himself with Cloaths.*

	£.	s.	d.	
To each Colonel of a Regiment of 1000 *Men,* -	20	0	0	*per Month.*
To one Lieutenant-Colonel for such Regiment,	16	13	4	*ditto.*
To one Major for such Regiment, - - - - -	13	6	8	*ditto.*
For a Captain of 100 *Men, including Officers,*	8	0	0	*ditto.*
For two Lieutenants for such Company, each, -	5	0	0	*ditto.*
For one Ensign for ditto, - - - - - - - - -	3	10	0	*ditto.*
For one Chaplain to each Regiment, - - - - -	8	0	0	*ditto.*
For one Adjutant to each Regiment, - - - - -	4	0	0	*ditto.*
For one Chirurgeon to each Regiment, - - - -	10	0	0	*ditto.*
For one Chirurgeon's Mate to ditto, - - - - -	5	6	8	*ditto.*
For each Serjeant, - - - - - - - - - - - -	2	3	1	*ditto.*
For each Corporal, - - - - - - - - - - -	1	18	7	*ditto.*
For each Drummer, - - - - - - - - - - -	1	18	7	*ditto.*
For each private Centinel, - - - - - - - -	1	16	0	*ditto.*

And, That there be allowed for enlisting the several Soldiers for said Expedition Two Shillings *each, to be paid to the Persons who shall inlist the same.*

Boston, March 17. 1758.

Attest.

Tho's Clarke, Dept'y Secr'y.

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"The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal," August 14, 1758, gives an account of the engagement which contains some details not found elsewhere, as follows: —

The following Particulars may be depended on, of the Skirmish between a Party of Col. Nichols's *Regiment and the Enemy, near Half-way-Brook.*

Stockade, at Half-Way-Brook, July 20. 1758.

Last Evening we sent ten Men to escorte a Post to the Lake, and as they were returning early the next Morning they met an Indian within ¾ of a Mile of the Advance-Guard of the Lake, who said he belonged to General Johnson — he was destitute of Arms and Ammunition, but said he was going to the Lake after his Powder-Horn and his Gun, he had left at the Stockade Fort there, and so he passed them: Our People had not travell'd three Miles before this Indian overtook them, having his Powder-Horn, and would fain have passed them, but they travelling very fast kept him Company till they came within a Mile and ½ of this Stockade, where lay in Ambush near 50 of the Enemy, who cahoop'd, at which the Indian sprung out of the Road towards the Enemy, and cahoop'd likewise, then the Enemy fired upon them; all which was done in an Instant: All these unhappy Men fell into the Hands of the Enemy, except one, who was reliev'd by a Party consisting of near 100, which was sent out immediately at the Hearing of the Guns; two Indians who were pursuing the Soldier, fled back near the Place where the Ambush was, where lay a large Body of the Enemy in a curve Live, with a great Advantage of Ground, which they arose from and fir'd, which was well answer'd from our Front; the Enemy being very numerous attempted to flank us, but a second Party being sent out covered a Retreat, and prevented their Design: However artfully they laid their Scheme, it appears from several Circumstances plain, that the Enemy had a Design to keep us in play, till they could cut us off from Fort Edward, which if they had, the parties posted between the Fort and the Lake must have been cut off and destroyed,* as the Enemy did consist of Eleven or Twelve Hundred. — By the great Marks they left behind them where the main Body lay, we have Reason to belive that we kill'd and wounded a considerable Number of the Enemy, by the Number of Poles cut and hew'd for Beirs; they left of Peas, Pork, Indian-Meal, a considerable Quantity on the Ground, as also Spears, Poles, Packs and Blankets: They march'd off in 5 Paths or Columns towards South-Bay, all which was discover'd by Major Gage and his Party. — Among our Slain are several brave and worthy Officers, and the others narrowly escaped, who also behaved well.

* *Col. Nichols's Regiment is posted at different Places between Fort Edward and the Lake.*

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A List of the Killed and Missing of the above Party.

Of Capt. Dakin's Company.

Killed. Capt. Samuel Dakin, Lieut. Samuel Curtis.
Missing. Wm. Grout, Jona. Patterson, Nath. Molton, all of Sudbury.

Of Capt. Jones's Company.

Killed. Capt. Samuel Jones of Wilmington, Lieut. Simon Godfrey of Billerica, Moses Hagget of Andover wounded and since dead.

Of Capt. Lawrence's Company.

Killed. Capt. Thomas Lawrence of Groton, Serjeant Wright and Simeon Wheeler of Westford. Corporal Gold of No. 1. Able Satel, Stephen Foster and Ebenezer [Eleazer] Eames of Groton.
Missing. Serj. Oliver Larkin of Groton, Joel Crosby of Westford.

Of Capt. Foster's Company.

Killed. Ensign Daniel Davis of Methuen, and Abraham Harden of Pembroke.

Of Capt. Fletcher's Company.

Killed. Serjeant Russel of Concord.
Missing. John Batman of Concord, Abner Keys and Wm. Eaton of Billerica.

Of Capt. Poor's Company.

Killed. David Payson of Rowley.
Missing. Caleb Kimball of Rowley.

Of Capt. Fail's Company.

Missing. Isaac Little of Dedham.

Of Capt. Fay's Company.

Missing. Corporal Joshua Newton of Southborough. John Ervine and Wm. Coggin slightly wounded.

[As Capt. Fales is not mention'd in the above List among the Killed, it is suppos'd the Report of it as mention'd in our Paper was a Mistake.]

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